

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Resource Management Plan

This document is a revision and expansion of the Resources Management Plan produced by Channel Islands National Park in 1994. The park has held several scoping sessions relative to resource management issues in the intervening period (October 1995, November 1995, October 1999).

The Resources Management Plan (RMP) is the parkwide road map for resource stewardship. The RMP flows from the General Management Plan (1985) and Statement for Management (1991). The RMP is the park's strategic plan for the long-range management of its resources and a tactical plan identifying short-term projects. The RMP identifies and describes specific inventory, monitoring, research, restoration, and mitigation actions that are currently active or are needed to perpetuate natural processes and resources and preserve cultural resources in Channel Islands National Park.

Resources management projects routinely involve shared responsibilities and interdivisional cooperation for successful development and implementation. Resources management issues often transcend park boundaries, requiring the coordination of other state, Federal, tribal, and local agencies as well as other parks, private interests, and landowners. The plan also serves as an important information source often used by parks, regional offices, and the Washington Office to satisfy information requests from a variety of governmental, public, and private interest groups.

The RMP sets priorities for park programs and projects and provides a rationale for allocating funding and staff. The plan includes all work that the park has identified as being of high priority to accomplish in the near future. There is a considerable amount of research on park resources that the park is not likely to fund, but which would contribute significant information to the scientific and social science communities and which the park would be supportive of hosting.

Purpose of the Park

Channel Islands National Park is part of an island chain lying just off California's southern coast. The

five park islands and their surrounding one nautical mile of ocean comprise Channel Islands National Park (Figure 1). These islands and the adjacent submerged lands were set aside as a national park because of their outstanding and unique natural and cultural resources. Channel Islands National Park was designated an International Biosphere Reserve in recognition of its genetic diversity and importance as an environmental baseline for research and monitoring. In addition, Congress declared the waters surrounding the park islands out to six nautical miles as a National Marine Sanctuary.

Figure 1. Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary



Channel Islands National Park, a relatively new national park, was created in 1980. Channel Islands National Monument, created in 1938, existed prior to establishment of the park. The monument included only the islands of Santa Barbara and Anacapa.

Significance of the Park

The park's significance with respect to natural resources lies to a great extent in the isolation of the islands (Table 1). This has resulted in the evolution of numerous species, subspecies, or varieties of unique flora and fauna, and brought about unique assemblages of species in habitats or ecosystems due to missing mainland forms or the presence of island endemics. The island ecosystems are often "simpler" or less diverse than those on the mainland, while providing habitat for species which may occur

nowhere else. The physical difficulty of access to the islands has provided some amount of protection of resources from exploitation. For the latter reason, several of the species of marine birds and mammals

which once commonly bred along the southern California coast are now able to breed in this region of sprawling development only on the Channel Islands.



Table 1. Island Statistics

Island	Acres	Hectares	Nearest distance to mainland (miles)	Highest Elevation (feet)	Length (miles)	Width (miles)	Coastline length (miles)
Anacapa	700	283	14	930	5	0.5	14
Santa Cruz	62,000	25,091	19	2,434	22	6	76
Santa Rosa	54,000	21,854	26.5	1,584	15	10	52
San Miguel	9,325	3,774	26	831	8	4	28
Santa Barbara	639	259	38	635	2	1	6

The park's significance with respect to cultural resources lies in its long and varied prehistoric and historic occupation and use. Evidence of the islands' prehistoric occupation is found in the archeological remains of villages, campsites, quarries and cemeteries. Some of the earliest sites in California and on the Pacific Coast occur within the park and the earliest dated human remains in North America came from Santa Rosa Island. The absence of burrowing animals and the limited human access have contributed greatly to retaining archeological sites and their surrounding environment in a relatively undisturbed state. Remnants of early European exploration and exploitation of the islands, the functioning 1930s light station on Anacapa Island, and the cattle and sheep ranch complexes on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands which date back to the mid-19th century, illustrate the occupation and uses during the historic period.

It is amazing that the islands with their abundance of resources exist in such close proximity to the second largest metropolitan area in the United States. The population of the Los Angeles Basin was nearly 9 million people in 1990 (U.S. Census). The population of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties in 1990 was 669,019 and 369,608, respectively. In recent history this has been one of the fastest growing areas of the nation. The Los Angeles Basin is expected to experience a 21.4% increase in growth between the years 1988 and 2000. Population density

figures indicate that the region is very heavily populated, with Orange County registering the highest figure, over 2,000 people per square mile. The percentage of the population classified as urban is extremely high. Education, age, and income statistics demonstrate that the regional population is slightly more educated, slightly younger, and generally more affluent than the comparable national standards. In 1993, Ventura County had a per capita personal income of \$22,003, which ranked 56th in the United States and was 106% of the national average. (BEA, 1995). Santa Barbara County had a per capita personal income of \$24,013, which ranked 28th in the United States and was 115% of the national average.

The park has a system to partially count and partially estimate visitation to the park. The system needs to be updated and expanded.

Visitation

All of the park islands are open to visitation and have campgrounds for public use. Some park visitors never step onto the islands; they only visit the marine waters within the park or the park's visitor center in Ventura.

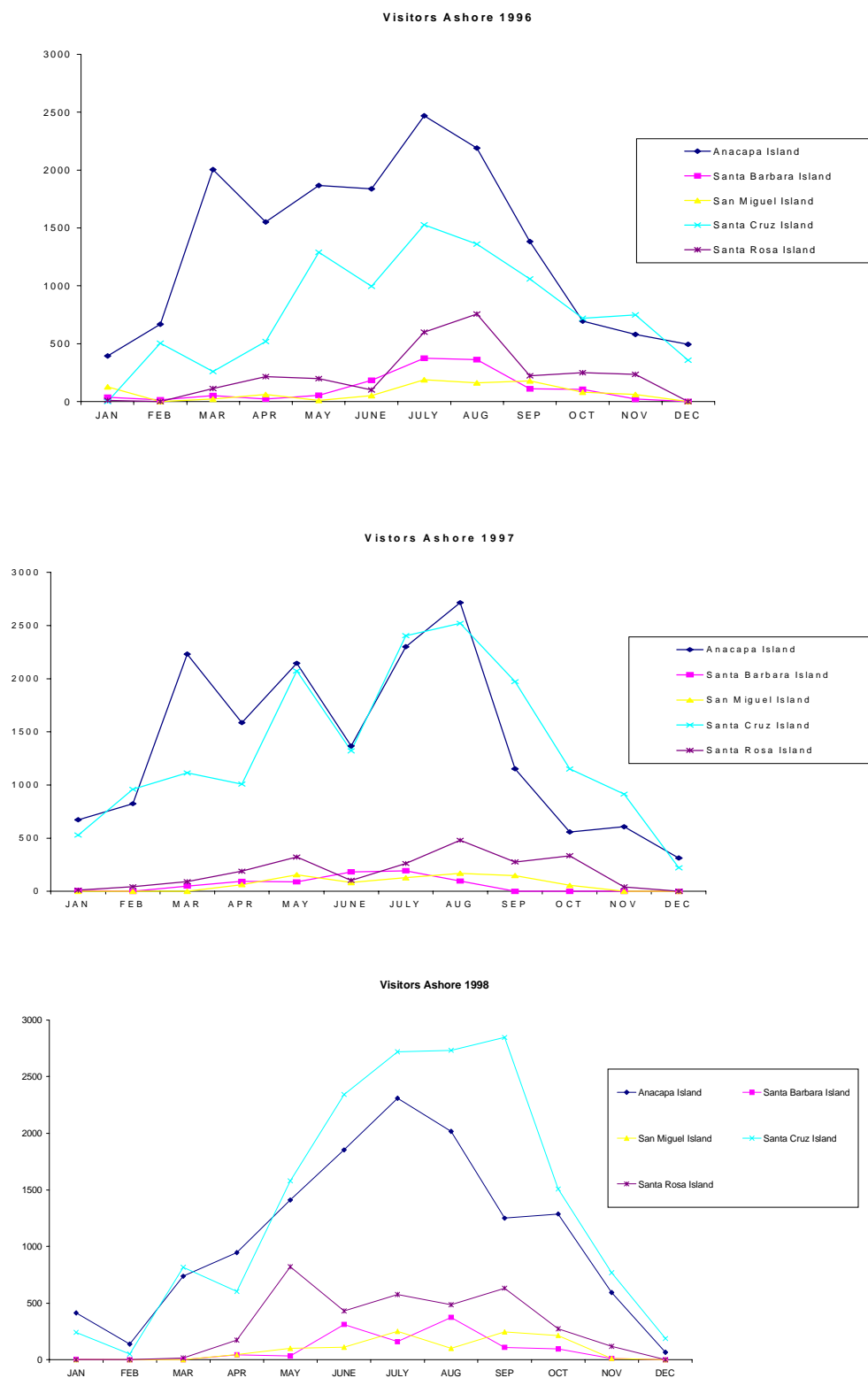
The park estimates numbers of marine visitors through counts at selected anchorages which are then extrapolated to the entire park. Direct counts are done of "visitors ashore", i.e. those visitors that come

onto the islands. In the years 1996, 1997, and 1998 30,472, 36,314, and 35,169 visitors, respectively, landed on the islands.(Table 2). The acquisition of eastern Santa Cruz Island caused a large change in visitation patterns and total numbers for the park (Figure 2).

Table 2. Visitors ashore on the park islands

Island	1996	1997	1998
Anacapa	16,134	16,472	13,023
S. Cruz	9,349	16,182	16,395
S. Rosa	2,701	2,152	3,526
S. Miguel	945	799	1,081
S. Barbara	1,343	709	1,144

Figure 2. Monthly counts of visitors ashore, 1996 - 1998



Legislation

Channel Islands National Park was established in 1980 by Public Law 96-199 "...to protect the nationally significant natural, scenic, wildlife, marine, ecological, archaeological, cultural, and scientific values of the Channel Islands in the State of California, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) the brown pelican nesting area;
- (2) the undisturbed tide pools providing species diversity unique to the eastern Pacific coast;
- (3) the pinnipeds which breed and pup almost exclusively on the Channel Islands, including the only breeding colony for northern fur seals south of Alaska;
- (4) the Eolian landforms and caliche;
- (5) the presumed burial place of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo; and
- (6) the archaeological evidence of substantial populations of Native Americans"

A provision of the park enabling legislation which has had a major impact on the knowledge of natural resources within the park and stimulated the development of a natural resources inventory and monitoring program is the following:

" The Secretary is directed to develop, in cooperation and consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, the State of California, and various knowledgeable Federal and private entities, a natural resources study report for the park, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. an inventory of all terrestrial and marine species, indicating their population dynamics, and probable trends as to future numbers and welfare;
- b. recommendations as to what actions should be considered for adoption to better protect the natural resources of the park".

Additional stipulations in the enabling legislation which clarify the intent of Congress regarding their vision of the purposes and future management of CHIS follow:

"In recognition of the special fragility and sensitivity of the park's resources, it is the intent of Congress that the visitor use within the park be limited to assure negligible adverse impact on the park resources. The Secretary shall establish appropriate visitor carrying capacities for the park."

and

"Within three complete fiscal years from the date of enactment of this title, the Secretary shall review the area within the park and shall report to the President, in accordance with subsections 3(c) and (d) of the Wilderness Act...his recommendations as to the suitability or unsuitability of any area within the park for designation as wilderness."

In addition to the park's enabling legislation, there is broad federal legislation that provides additional guidance to the National Park Service in the management of natural and cultural resources. Some of these laws are:

a) NPS Organic Act of 1916 (16 USC 1) established the National Park Service and mandated that it "shall promote and regulate the use of the federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

b) Redwoods National Park Act (PL 95-250) of 1978 directs that within the National Park System "authorization of activities shall be construed and the protection, management, administration...shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established..."

c) National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (Thomas Bill) directs "the National Park Service to provide state-of-the-art management, protection, and interpretation of and research on the resources of the National Park system." This law also stipulates that "the trend in the condition of resources of the National Park System shall be a significant factor in the annual performance evaluation of each superintendent of a unit of the National Park System."

Administrative History

Establishment of the park abolished Channel Island National Monument by enlarging the area encompassed by NPS boundaries to include San Miguel, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa Islands, and the surrounding one nautical mile. The park's Statement for Management, written in 1991, contains a

comprehensive history of the legislation and interagency agreements which directly affect the park.

The park acquired Santa Rosa Island in 1986. The park's enabling legislation allowed that "...the Secretary may enter into a lease agreement with the former owner under which the former owner may continue any existing use of such property which is compatible with the administration of the park and with the preservation of the resources therein." Under this provision the park permitted continuation of the grazing and game hunting operations by the former owners until 1998. At that time, commercial cattle ranching was terminated. Commercial hunting of deer and elk may be permitted to continue until 2011, provided that ungulate numbers are managed to protect resources.

The NPS completed acquisition of the eastern 10% of Santa Cruz Island (6,200 acres) in 1997. This followed many years of the NPS sharing ownership of this section with private landowners. The remainder of Santa Cruz Island is owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC donated 8,500 acres, contiguous to the existing NPS property, to the NPS in FY 2000. The park legislation authorizes expenditure of federal funds for the cooperative management of all of Santa Cruz Island. TNC works with the NPS under the provisions of a Memorandum of Agreement.

The National Park Service is legally responsible to remove the personal property of the former owners of east Santa Cruz Island from the island. Their personal property included the feral sheep which had once been part of a ranching operation and, more recently, were being commercially hunted. As of September, 1999 the NPS had live-captured over 9,000 sheep and does not know of any remaining.

Management Goals and Objectives for Natural & Cultural Resources

The current SFM establishes three primary management objectives:

A. To understand, restore, and protect the natural ecosystems and cultural resources for which Channel Islands National Park was established.

B. To provide for visitor use, enjoyment and understanding of Channel Islands National Park and the natural and cultural resources the park was established to protect.

C. To provide adequate facility development and staffing to ensure the park is managed and protected as mandated by laws and regulations and in accordance with approved management plans.

More specific goals targeted to meeting Objective A, most closely related to resources management, above are listed in the SFM, as follows:

1. Continue the orderly planning and implementation of resource inventorying, monitoring, restoration and management in all lands and waters managed by the park.

2. Improve cooperation and coordination with other agencies, organizations, Native American groups and other special interest groups, both within and outside of the park. Ensure restoration and protection of park resources is understood and supported by others and that compatible management schemes are initiated to the extent possible in areas surrounding the park.

3. Complete the acquisition of East Santa Cruz Island. Through planning, permits and agreements ensure protection of the rights of individuals, agencies and groups who retain legal interests in the park. Through these instruments ensure the prevention of further resource degradation, the initiation of ecosystem restoration, the allowing of appropriate visitor use and the protection of threatened natural and cultural resources on all lands and waters within the park.

4. Continue to evaluate established carrying capacities and authorized visitor activities established for each island as they relate to information gathered through baseline research and planning activities. Make adjustments as necessary to prevent adverse impacts to resources and ensure quality visitor experience.

5. Through baseline information gathering and minimal impact scientific investigation, improve knowledge and understanding of park resources and finalize management planning and land protection initiatives. Begin wilderness suitability studies and wilderness recommendations as mandated by park enabling legislation.

The current General Management Plan (GMP) was approved in 1985. It lays out more specific visions of how the park will be managed and the resource actions that need to be taken. These will be more fully described later in this document.

NEPA compliance and consultation

Compliance (including requirements relating to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), threatened and endangered species, coastal zones, floodplains and wetlands, air quality and other areas) is accomplished on a case-by-case basis as funding for a resource management activity becomes likely. Each action called for in a RMP project statement must be categorized as to whether environmental compliance has already been accomplished, is not required, or is required but has not been done and will be done before any irreversible and irretrievable decisions or actions have been taken.

NEPA requirements ensure that any proposal to implement a previously non-operative portion of this plan will include an opportunity for public comment and input through the review of documents such as environmental assessments.

The cultural resources portions of this plan have been reviewed in draft by the California State Historic Preservation Officer. Consultation on individual projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will occur as necessary as implementation funds become available.

Relationship of other park divisions to resource management programs

Development and implementation of a comprehensive integrated resource management program at Channel Islands requires very close coordination and cooperation between all park, regional, and Washington Office divisions and their staff, as well as the staff of the federal, state, county and municipal agencies which have jurisdiction within the park.

The components of an integrated resource management program include: management direction, planning and compliance, consultation and coordination, information gathering, research, inventory, restoration and rehabilitation, records management, resource maintenance and operations, protection and enforcement, mitigation, monitoring and evaluation, and education and interpretation. All park staff have some responsibility for managing the natural and cultural resources of the park.

The Superintendent has primary responsibility for oversight of the entire resource management program, setting natural and cultural resource program priorities, establishing deadlines for project

completion, allocating the personnel and funding needed to successfully implement projects and programs, and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of resource programs.

Cultural and Natural Resources Division staff work closely with the Superintendent to provide scientifically valid information for making informed decisions that protect, restore, and preserve the park's natural, cultural, and scientific resources.

The Protection Division has primary responsibility for resource protection and law enforcement, issuing special use permits and monitoring their implementation, wildland and structural fire management programs.

The Interpretation Division has primary responsibility for environmental education and interpretation. They inform the public of issues regarding protection and management of park resources. This division operates the mainland Visitor Center.

The Administration Division has primary responsibility for administrative support of the entire resource management program, including but not limited to: budget and fiscal affairs, personnel actions and EEO, purchasing supplies and equipment, training, and computer support.

The Maintenance Division has primary responsibility for site and structure maintenance, rehabilitation, trails, mitigation of the impacts of recreational use and facility development.

The Transportation Division supports the transportation of employees to the islands via boats and aircraft. The division maintains a fleet of NPS boats, which are the primary vehicles of transportation. This division also runs the seven-day per week dispatch function.

Relationship of cooperating agencies to park resources management

Management of the park cannot succeed without the cooperation of numerous federal and state agencies and numerous private organizations. Any listing of these agencies and organizations is certain to leave out important cooperators.

Following is a list of agencies or organizations with jurisdiction or ownership of land within park boundaries:

Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA) – The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) surrounds the park islands and overlaps with the park’s marine waters. The Sanctuary boundaries extend 6 nautical miles beyond mean high tide for each island.

California Department of Fish & Game (CDF&G) – CDF&G has management authority over the living marine resources in the water column surrounding the park islands.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – TNC owns the majority of Santa Cruz Island.

California State Lands Commission – responsible for offshore submerged lands.

U.S. Navy (Department of Defense) – the U.S. Navy owns San Miguel Island. The NPS manages the island under a Memorandum of Understanding.